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AUTUMN COLOR HIGH LIGHTS IN FOLIAGE AND FRUIT

Eye catching fall color a full month in advance of the normal display is a distinction of the Schlesinger Red Maple, *Acer rubrum schlesingeri*, a clone selected by the Arnold Arboretum especially because of this desirable characteristic. As early as the last week in August specimens in the Maple Collection were showing highly colored foliage quite comparable in brilliance to that assumed by the type species later in the fall. And, for several weeks this pleasing prelude to the autumn color display continued. In ways other than its prematurity the Schlesinger Red Maple is identical to the type, showing the same three lobed leaves with downy lower surfaces, the same red flowers and seed wings and the same preference for wet lowlands which is responsible for the often used common name, Swamp Maple. A slow growth rate adapts it perfectly for small scale effects wherever early color is wanted in tree form. The difficulty of procurement is the factor currently limiting its use.

Among hawthorns there is a precocious coloring form, too, one received from the Arnold Arboretum in 1926 under the name, *Crataegus barrettiana*. An imposing round headed small tree (to 20 ft.) with long sweeping and recurving lower branches, it is like the well known Cockspur Thorn in many ways. The shape and texture of its obovate leaves is similar, and there is further resemblance in the size and slenderness of its thorns. The bright red fruit is smaller, however, about the size of a garden pea, and drops early. While other hawthorns are still in their summer garb the Barrett Hawthorn begins to turn, a diffusion of bronzy purple with golden undertones supplanting the green. Full color had been attained by September 13 this year.

Aspens and Poplars are usually thought of as contributors of yellow and gold to the autumn scene, but one, the Japanese Aspen, *Populus Sieboldii*, deviates by introducing a touch of red. Although the effect is mottled, being confined largely to the areas between the veins, and is not typical of all leaves, it is nevertheless sufficiently noticeable to attract attention. Other than for this reason the species differs little

from other aspens. The movement of its foliage in the wind is interesting, of course, and the fact that the leaves cling late worth noting.

The fall color sequence of the Maple clan is extended by a most attractive and almost unknown species from Central China and Japan known as the Nikko Maple, *Acer nikoense*. A tree reaching 40 or 50 feet in height in the wild, it remains much lower under cultivation. This is largely attributable to a slow growth rate. Belonging in the "Negundo" section of the Acer taxonomic classification the Nikko Maple has compound leaves (three leaflets) and bears its male and female flowers on separate plants. At the moment, however, our interest is centered on the fall foliage effect, distinctive in that the scarlet coloring is concentrated along the midrib and branching veins leaving an edging of yellow along the margins. A handsome two tone effect results. Another unusual feature of the Nikko Maple's coloring is the fact that it is confined to only one surface, the upper. The petioles are scarlet, though, and densely pubescent.

For flowers and fruit the Crabapples have no equal among woody ornamentals, but it is not generally known that some forms offer such additional attractions as conspicuous fall foliage color, unique growth habits, interesting twig textures, etc. It was the color change of the leaves that attracted our attention this fall to *Malus Halliana spontanea*, a Halls Crabapple variety brought from Japan in 1919. Dwarf, twiggy and ordinarily broader than high, it is really more shrubby than tree-like, an alternate blooming sort with pink buds, white flowers and yellow green fruit. The change of foliage color is an annual event, however, the leathery leaves taking on purplish red and scarlet tones. It was already showing good color by September 18 this year.

Another introduced tree adding singular beauty to the autumn and winter landscape is the stately European Beech, *Fagus sylvatica*, late coloring subject whose persistent green and eventual clear gold and russet foliage extends the season to November or later. Everything about the beech is interesting—, its long pointed winter buds, smooth gray bark, soft green new foliage and refreshing summer leaf color. The magnificent sweep of its branches is noteworthy, too, as is its habit of retaining many of its leaves throughout the winter. It is an excellent shade tree and one which because of a slow rate of growth is sure to remain within bounds.

The deciduous shrubby Euonymus, a group renowned for colorful foliage and bountiful fruit are indispensable components of the autumn scene. And while the unique rose pink fall garb of the Winged Euonymus, *E. alata*, and its more compact red leaved variety, "*compacta*", are perhaps best known and among the most colorful, they are by no means the only desirable forms available. A special word of praise is due the Korean Winged Euonymus, *Euonymus alata* "Korean type", a later coloring clone whose combination of ornamental features destined it to become one of the most sought-after shrubs. Although about the same size (6 to 8 ft.) and shape as the type, the bush is low branched and has a somewhat

stiffer appearance due to the heavily corky ridged twigs. The foliage is larger and shows in its rosy pink fall color change more of the yellow and orange tones. An orange-scarlet over-all effect results, one lasting for a long period. After defoliation another of the plant's attractions is revealed, a profusion of small red fruit which remains colorful until browned by hard freezes. Still another variation, *Euonymus alata triflora* (Franch & Sav.), is a more erect shrub with rigid bright green branches exhibiting varied degrees of corkiness. On some parts of the stem the beige colored wings may be very conspicuous, reaching 5/16 inches in width, while other areas may be entirely smooth. The leaves are larger than those of the Winged Euonymus and sharply and finely toothed. Shades of orange terra-cotta or bittersweet mark their autumnal color change. Orange centered, one seeded fruits similar to those of the Korean type, but less abundant, are noticeable after the leaves fall.

Shrubby *Euonymus semiexserta* (Koehne), Japanese species of distinction combines shapeliness of contour with gayly colored foliage and prodigious quantities of rosy pink fruit. The latter occurs in clusters on slender drooping pedicels, presenting a spectacular pink-orange effect until browned by heavy frosts. The structural framework of the bushes themselves is also extremely interesting, being low branched, flat topped or slightly rounded and broader than high. Eight feet is the usual maximum. The branches are gray with the heavier stems showing a suggestion of striping.

Yellow, old gold, russet and eventually red mark the color sequence of the Oriental Photinia or Christmasberry, *Photinia villosa*, erect branched shrub or small tree (to 15 ft.) from China, Korea and Japan planted for its small, five petaled white flowers in flat clusters, persistent bright red fruit and good autumn color. With so many other plants blooming in late May its floral display is apt to pass unnoticed and the fondness of birds for its fruit results in their disappearance almost before they have a chance to make a showing. Not so with the foliage, however, whose period of autumnal effectiveness lasts for almost a month. If planted against an evergreen background the Photinia's beauty may be doubled.

A bumper fruit crop on the Winterberries, *Ilex verticillata*, again emphasizes the value of this splendid shrubby deciduous holly in the autumn scene. Only the greed of Cedar Waxwings and other birds determines how long the plump scarlet berries will be left to be enjoyed. The bush has proved adaptable to drier locations in spite of a natural affinity for hydric habitats and can be used advantageously in many home landscapes.

The ever popular Washington Hawthorn, *Crataegus phaenopyrum* (syn. *cordata*), has never fruited more abundantly than now, every plant bearing a bountiful harvest of highly polished Chinese red fruit, small but thickly clustered on slender drooping stems. With an extended season of effectiveness which carries well into the winter the tree provides not only a colorful picture but plentiful bird food as well. Unlike other thorns this species is of upright pyramidal growth, broadening out only after reaching its mature height of 25 feet. It is of pleasing twiggy texture,



Euonymus semiexserta, shrubby Japanese species of distinction

and has attractive small triangular leaves which are bronze tinged as they unfold in the spring, dark green in summer and bright orange and scarlet in the fall. The small white flowers are May borne.

"Magic Berry", the name given a new Chenault Coralberry hybrid (*Symphoricarpos Chenaultii* "Magic Berry"), introduced by the F. J. Grootendorst Nursery of Boskoop, Holland, is suggestive of the attraction of this shrub's showy fruit. The ovoid shaped berries, intermediate in size between those of the parents, "*alba*" and "*orbiculatus*", and of a pleasing rose pink color are thickly clustered along the erect stems entirely unobstructed by foliage. Their excellent keeping qualities insures a long season of interest. It might also be mentioned that the leaves of the Magic Berry *Symphoricarpos* show tinges of coppery fall color, a characteristic not typical of the group.

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